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by **James Martin**

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by

JAMES MARTIN

A Manual for the Collector - dealer

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Preface

I HAVE written this book as a short guide for the collector who likes to go out and hunt for records in junk-shops, auction rooms and so on, either for the pleasure of the chase (and the warm feeling that one gets from looking at a 'find' in one's collection), or with a view to making a profit. I should like to say now, and I will be saying it again later, that record dealing is a heart-breaking affair if you wish to make a living out of it. But if you view it as a means for the provision of an occasional luxury, or an addition to your own collection, then spare-time dealing can provide a lot of fun, some new friends, and even a little—very little—profit.

I have made some remarks about certain artists which may, if interpreted incorrectly, give offence. I would like to state clearly that no criticism of the artists in question is intended, and that if any mud is being slung, then it is aimed at such targets as technical deficiencies of recording machinery, and the vagaries of the market for second-hand records. I hope, indeed, that I may have drawn attention to the pleasure that may be obtained from the records of some neglected artists at the same time as drawing attention to their financial drawbacks.

In addition to hints on what to buy, what not to buy, and how to sell records, I have made a brief survey of the history of the record trade, with some remarks on international trade relationships, and while I have made every effort to ensure correctness in these chapters, I feel I should apologise for any slips that may have crept in. I hope, also, that these chapters may prove of interest to those who are not immediately concerned with making money.

Lastly, I should like to thank those friends who have provided information, answered queries, corrected mistakes, and made useful suggestions. Should readers find mistakes, or have comments to make, I shall be grateful to hear from them, with a view to incorporation in any later editions.

J.M.

Sidmouth.
March, 1956.

Chapter I General Approach

THE business of junk-shopping falls fairly cleanly into three classes: the collection of operatic, jazz, and personality records. Each class involves some fundamental differences of approach—almost, one might say, of technique. This chapter is designed as a brief exposition of these differences, both for the collector wishing to embellish his own collection, and for the collector who wishes to make a profit at the game.

Firstly, we will consider the potential finds for the searcher after operatic records, under which heading we must include (for the purposes of this paragraph only—later in the book, I use the term in its normal sense) all vocal records of a classical nature. Here, we are concerned in the main with records made by celebrities, often of international repute. As we may expect from this, the records we are seeking will be found under the trade marks of the more important firms; furthermore, rarely will they be found issued under pseudonyms. Secondly, we must always remember that the potential customer for this type of record is extremely choosy as far as condition is concerned, and so great care has to be taken in making purchases, as only the rarest records will have any re-sale value in condition other than good. Lastly, we may remember that it is in this class that discs of great value may be found; indeed, it will be fairly true to say that few discs worth less than about five shillings will prove worth buying, as either they were pressed in very large quantities, or else they were made by an unfashionable artist; in either case, it will prove difficult to find a buyer.

The second big class is that of jazz records—once again the term is used in the widest possible sense. Here we have contradictions of the points made above. The majority of discs which will be worth buying were made in America, and are thus only to be found here as re-issues. Secondly, the majority of these re-issues were made by mushroom firms, which appeared in large numbers in the 'twenties', and were able, by various methods, greatly to undercut the long-established firms. It is to the long obsolete makes that we must often turn, and in addition, many records were issued

under pseudonyms. Further, we find that the potential customer is far less fastidious as to condition; almost any disc through whose grooves a steel needle may be forced is saleable. Lastly, and the most depressing fact of all, very few English issues are worth more than half-a-crown; but more of this in a later chapter.

The searcher for musical comedy and personality records is in an even more unfortunate position, for he falls in between two stools: game may be found on any label; when it is killed, prices are often low, and this branch is far more liable to the dictates of fashion than any other.

On the whole, detailed advice is of most use to the operatic collector, not only as he stands to win the biggest prizes—and make the biggest blunders—but in the other classes a much greater dependence must be placed on experience rather than book information as given here.

Chapter II

Companies of Importance, and Their Labels

THE oldest name still in the trade is that of Columbia; however, the Gramophone and Typewriter Co. made their first discs before the Columbia Graphophone Co., and so I propose to start with their history.

(a) 'G & T' and H.M.V.

The first records by this company were made in 1896, in Hanover. The company was then known as "Berliner's Gramophone Co.", and consequently, discs made by it are called today 'Berliner's'. These first records were 7 inches in diameter; in 1900 10-inch discs were also made. Berliners bear no label, instead in the wax is to be found, just above the hole, the name of the company; this is faintly impressed, and is often partially illegible. The recording cherub, known as the 'angel', and the number of the record are firmly impressed above this, the angel being the most prominent feature for identification purposes. The titling was inscribed on to the 'mother' by hand, and reproduced in a round script. It should be noted that the name Berliner persisted for many years in Canada, and Canadian records bear the names His Master's Voice, Berliner, and Victor all together.

These records are correctly described as Canadian Victor, or, to use the conventional symbols, which will be explained more fully in a later chapter, ViC, and not as Berliner.

In 1900 the company changed its name to The Gramophone and Typewriter (And Sister) Companies, Ltd., and we enter into the period known as 'G. & T.'! Seven-, ten- and twelve-inch discs were produced, at first with plain backs, but soon bearing the angel. Labels were also used, for the first time. From 1900–1902 these were large and flush on the disc; in 1902 they were made smaller and raised on a boss, round which a ridge was raised in the next year. In 1904 the label was sunk beneath the surface of the disc, and in 1905, with the label still sunken, a ridge round it was used. This became the standard form, and persisted until 1914.

The first labels were black; in 1900 a red-labelled celebrity series was started in St. Petersburg, which was adopted for all countries in 1902, being the famous red G. & T. Between 1904 and 1906 certain 'super-celebrities' made records, and appeared with special colours: Battistini and Chaliapin—orange; Clara Butt—blue; Melba—lilac; Adelina Patti—pink; and Tamagno—green.

In 1906 pink became the standard colour for super-celebrities, into which grade were elevated most of the red label artists, and green and buff were adopted as the colours for all celebrity concerted items. Certain recordings may, in consequence of this, be issued at various times with red or pink labels, the red usually being the earlier pressing; in addition, some were demoted to the black label section, while certain black label artists were promoted to red. For this reason the colour of the label should be noted when describing G. & T's.

In 1908 the company became merely the Gramophone Co., and the inscription on the labels was changed. In 1909 the picture of Nipper, which had been in use for some years as a trade mark on other products, appeared on the records with the inscription "Gramophone Monarch (or Concert, Melba, Patti, etc.) Records" around the upper rim of the label. In 1910 the company lost the exclusive use of the name gramophone, and in consequence this inscription was changed to His Master's Voice.

It is now convenient to tabulate the various stages of label

development, and to quote their conventional names:

	<i>Company Name</i>	<i>Conventional Label Name</i>
1897	Berliner	Berliner
1900-02	G. & T.	Flush G. & T.
1902	G. & T.	Raised G. & T.
1903	G. & T.	Raised, with rim. G. & T.
1904	G. & T.	Sunk G. & T.
1905-8	G. & T.	G. & T. (No qualification)
1908	Gramophone Co.	Pre-dog
1909	Gramophone Co.	Dog-Con, or Dog-Mon.
1910 to date	Gramophone Co.	H.M.V.

Two new colours were introduced at this time, and it may be convenient to sum up the situation in another table.

<i>Price Range</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Popular	Black or Dark Green	Also cheaper classical artists
Medium	Purple	Classical records only
Celebrity	Red	Solo or concerted
Super celebrity, A	Pink	Solo or concerted
Super celebrity, B	Green & Buff	Solo or concerted
Super celebrity, C	White	Concerted only

To this must be added the 'Special Artists', as mentioned above.

In 1914 a major change in label design came into force: Nipper was changed from the natural colouring previously employed to a black monochrome; he was encased, along with the record numbers, in a framework of gold. After the war Nipper resumed his peace-time colouring, but the frames were retained. During the war period there were further colour changes: the purple and black labels were abolished, being replaced by plum and deep green. The plum was a popular priced line, while the deep green was medium; the majority of purple-labelled discs were promoted to the red-label section. At the same time the pink super-celebrity series reverted to red, with the exceptions of Patti, Clara Butt and Tamagno.

In 1922 the production of single-sided discs was discontinued, with the exception of sets occupying an odd number of sides, and all single-siders were gradually re-drawn, and many re-issued as double-sided discs. Thus a trend which had been taking place on the continent from 1906 was completed.

It was considered that a single-sided disc had a snob appeal, and up to 1922, only the lower priced grades had been doubled. At first the single-sided numbers were retained, so that the first double-siders had two numbers; the introduction of the plum-labelled series saw the first double-sided number. Later doublings were also allotted new numbers.

The next year brought the commencement of the "Historical (No. 2) Catalogue". Both double- and single-sided discs were included in this; issues were placed in the same series as the ordinary discs and at the same prices. Special colours were still used for Butt, Tamagno, and Patti, although they had been dropped for the Melba, Battistini, and Chaliapin at various times since the beginning of the war. This series continued until 1945, when it finally disappeared after several depletions during the war years. In 1951 the Historical Series was replaced by the Archive Series, a single issue of 127 discs, all double sided, in the white label price group. This issue, on account of the high price, proved unsuccessful and was withdrawn in 1954. A small number of L.P. re-issues have been made, at normal prices, and this would seem to have a much more popular appeal.

In 1926 a revolution took the industry, comparable to the L.P. Revolution of recent years. This was the impact of electrical recording. This process, like the L.P. discs, had been long in maturing. Experimental records had been made before the war, and some commercially issued discs of unusually high quality are said to be electrically recorded. The L.P. had also its predecessors. These were, first of all, 14-inch discs of normal speed and groove size. They were issued by Odeon and Fonotipia, and also a very small number by Victor; they proved unsatisfactory, owing to their unwieldiness, and were dropped. A 10-inch disc, with a finer grooving and a very small waste area, was produced in the twenties by some firms, the most important being the 'Broadcast Twelve' issue. These were capable of playing up to six minutes but were again a failure, owing to the lack of international celebrities available to the firms concerned. Victor produced, in 1932, the prototype of the modern L.P., being micro-grooved, and revolving at 33½ r.p.m. Only a very few discs were sold before the scheme was abandoned, and these are of immense rarity.

But to return to electrical recording. This was first used commercially at the end of 1925, and was generally adopted in 1926; some firms, however, retained the acoustic process until 1930. For the purposes of this article, however, we are concerned with the label change on H.M.V. This took the form of a complete redesigning. The frames were removed, and it became the practice to include much more information concerning the accompaniment, libretto writers, and such refinements. The lettering was also much improved. These new-style labels were affixed to new pressings of the older discs that were still available, and stocks of them are still in use for some little sold records. In 1938 Nipper was reduced in size but not in colour. In the war, however, he once more assumed an emergency dress, this time of brown. This final state is still in use for 78 records, and looks to be the last ever. The L.P. label is similar in design and colouring to the pre-Great War style, but, fortunately, much more descriptively worded.

That concludes this brief history of the Gramophone Co. in Europe; now we turn to its American sister, Victor, now R.C.A. Victor.

The development of label design is similar, though simpler. The first issues were manufactured by G. & T., in Hanover, on behalf of Victor, and bear an inscription to this effect. In 1906 pressing began in America and records were produced, with a label showing Nipper, and bearing the words around the hole, 'Grand Prize,' and the price. In 1907 this was dropped and a large block of patent details was shown around the base, to be replaced, in 1910, by a Victor label with a much reduced set of patents. In 1915 the wording was changed to 'Victrola'. Another revision took place in 1926; Nipper was reduced in size, and the wording was given much greater prominence. This type, with some variations, has remained in use ever since. Throughout the label has been printed in one colour only.

The colour system has been much simpler than in England. Popular records have been blue since about 1925; medium-priced records black, and celebrity, red. There has been only one special artist, Melba, who had a lilac label. About 1910 records were sometimes pressed in a brown wax, instead of the standard black.

The G. & T. numbering system calls for some explanation: after trying several set ups, I have evolved the following table, which, with the aid of examples, should be clear:

Consider the fullest possible number to be in the form:
a-0bcdef.

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
a-, def.	Series number	Commencing 000-999, then 2-000-2-999, etc.
O	Size indication	Presence indicates 12" Absence 10" or 7"
b	Language used	Absence English or Latin 2 Russian 3 French 4 German 5 Italian or Latin 6 Spanish 7 Oriental languages 8 Other European
c	Nature of matter recorded	1 Spoken, miscellaneous 2 Sung or spoken by male artist 3 Sung or spoken by female artist 4 Sung or spoken by concerted artists 7 Solo instrumental artists 8 Orchestral recording 9 Speech, and other miscellaneous recordings

It should be noted that a brief summary of symbols b and c are commonly included on the record label.

To make the above more readily intelligible, I shall now quote some examples:

2-2205	10-in.	Male	English
2-053179	12-in.	Female	Italian
7-64111	10-in.	Concerted	Spanish
07989	12-in.	Instrumental	
3-8934	10-in.	Orchestral	

The system was replaced in 1930 by a process where a simple three-figure series number was allotted, prefixed by 32- or 42- for 10-inch and 12-inch discs, respectively. Up to 1931 each and every side made was allotted a single-sided number, although most of the later discs were only issued in

doubled form. These appear on the label, and in the wax, of every issue of this side.

Many artists recorded a selection on more than one occasion. When this was the case, a new matrix number was almost invariably taken up, and a new single-sided number was usually, but by no means invariably, allotted. The cases when the new matrix number was not taken up are of three types: first, a re-make of a selection previously recorded, but not issued; second, an electrical re-make of a selection previously acoustically made: in this case, distinction may be made by the fact that a symbol, usually a triangle, was added to the matrix number of all electrically recorded discs. This is important, and will often be referred to. The third case is, fortunately, very rare, and is generally due to carelessness.

(b) Columbia

The name of the Columbia Graphophone Co. is actually older than that of the Gramophone Co.; they were, however, in their early days associated only with recording of the cylinder type, and did not venture into disc production until after the turn of the century. Their name of 'Graphophone' is an evasion of the supposed copyright nature of 'Gramophone'; 'Phonograph' is another example of this. Although a test case showed, as has been mentioned, that gramophone was not a copyright word, the name of Columbia's product has remained unchanged.

The early discs were seven, ten and twelve inches in size, and bore a black and silver label. The backs bore a sticker giving price and copyright conditions.

Celebrity recordings were first made in 1903; in America they appeared with a red and gold label, but in England bore the normal black and silver. In America a label bearing a red, white and blue streamer, known as the 'Banner' or 'Red, White & Blue' was used from 1909. Shortly before the war an ornate pink-labelled 'Grand Opera Series' was introduced which was later simplified in design. In 1915 the black and silver label was replaced in England by a black label for popular discs, brown for medium-priced, and light blue for celebrity discs, with a purple label for super celebrities. The pink label series was gradually re-issued with light blue labels, and in 1921 the only pink labelled discs left were a super-super celebrity series

for Nordica only.

At the end of the acoustic period the situation may be summed up thus:

Class	Colour	Prefix	Size
Popular	Dark Blue	None or D	10" and 12" double sided
Medium	Brown	D	10" and 12" double sided
Celebrity	Light Blue	L or D or A	10" and 12" double sided
Super	Purple	None, P, PX	10" and 12" single or doubled
Special	Pink	None	12" single (Nordica only)

In 1926 the brown labelled series was dropped, and in 1931 the entire numbering system was revised. As may be seen, a disc with a D prefix, or without one at all, could be any one of six types, according to the number block in which it occurred. In practice, about a dozen different blocks applied to each of these prefixes alone.

A simplified system was given for which we resort to another table:

A specimen prefix is in the form 23X; 2 indicates the colour of the label and 3 the country in which the record is to be issued. X is a size indication; its presence indicates a 12-inch disc, and its absence a 10-inch disc. The number started in every case from 1, and proceeded in order of release. Numbers of sets in automatic coupling started at 8,000.

Discs previously issued retained the old number, while all fresh issues were made under the new system.

Colour Symbol	Colour	Country Symbol	Country
B	Brown	None, B	Great Britain
D	Dark Blue	C	General Continental
G	Green	CB	Belgian
L	Light Blue	D	Danish
P	Red Purple	(C) F	French
R	Red	H	Dutch
Y	Yellow	L	Latin America (?)
		N	Balkan (?)
		(C) Q	Italian
		TS	?
		(C) V	Greek
		(C) W	German
		(C) Z	Swiss

The country symbol is not always consistently used.

I think that this is clear enough without the need to quote examples. Issues by American Columbia are numbered by a totally independent system.

(c) Zonophone

This company began its activities in Italy, about 1898, and shortly established branches elsewhere, where it became known as International Zonophone. At first all issues were operatic, but the later London and Paris recordings were also of a popular nature.

During the early stages of its existence, the company employed three label colours:

Green:	Standard, and popular.
Light or dark blue:	Celebrity.
Orange:	Super celebrity.

During these three years many major singers made records for the company, and the lists are more dazzling than even G. & T. for the same period.

In 1904 the company was taken over by G. & T. From then on the output, with the exception of a few American recordings, became entirely popular. The blue and orange series were deleted, with the exception of a few items, which were re-issued with green labels, and the label was, to all intents and purposes, a cheap line for G. & T. A white and green "Grand Opera Celebrity Series", and a red "Celebrity Series" was started; these were, however, celebrity by name rather than by nature.

In 1910 double-sided records replaced the single-sided, and were called "Zonophone Twin" records, the 'International' status being finally discarded. In 1931 the E.M.I. organisation engulfed, along with the Regal Company, the Zonophone lists, and the two were amalgamated to form "Regal-Zonophone", purely popular in output. Since about 1948 the products of the company have been confined solely to Salvation Army band records, in a new series, ironically, with a light blue label!

(d) Odeon, Fonotipia, Parlophone and Cetra

These names belong to distinct, though later very much inter-related companies, and it will be helpful to commence with a review of where the names occur:

Great Britain	...	Parlophone		Odeon	
France	...			Odeon	Fonotipia*
Italy	...		Cetra	Odeon	Fonotipia*
Germany	...	Parlophone*		Odeon	
U.S.A.	...	Parlophone*	Cetra	Odeon*	
Australia	...	Parlophone		Odeon	

The exact degree of 'linkedness' varies from country to country, but the table above may be of assistance in the establishment of relationships. In addition, the names marked with an * are obsolete in the countries concerned.

Now for a few brief historical notes:

Fonotipia was started in 1903, in Italy, and a branch was set up in Paris in 1906. Records were at first 10½ inches, with a green and red label. Later 12-inch and 14-inch discs were also issued with a red label. All issues were celebrity in nature, mainly vocal. The company had strong affiliations with Odeon, and many Odeon records are to be found with the inscription "Made by Fonotipia Companies". In 1924 the company was purchased by Odeon, and such records as were not deleted appeared exclusively with the Odeon label.

Odeon was started in 1906, in Germany, with a brown label. Discs were again 10½ inches or 12 inches. Branches were formed in France, and after the merger with Fono, in Italy. Before this, however, the Odeon label was to be found in these countries as a cheap line of Fono. Odeon records appeared by virtue of affiliations, in various countries, as may be seen from the table above, both on the Odeon and on Parlophone labels.

Parlophone was an English company which was formed in 1923. Issues were mainly obtained by overseas affiliations, of which one of the most important was Odeon. The labelling has been as follows:

Size	Price	Category	Colour	Prefix	Origin
10"		Popular (1923-29)	Red	E5,000	Many
10"		Popular (1933-)	Magenta	F100	Many
10"		Medium (1927-)	Dark Blue or Purple	R1,000	Many
12"		Medium (1924-)	Dark Blue	E10,000	Many
10"		Celebrity (1924-)	Brown	R020,000	Odeon
12"		Celebrity (1924-)	Brown	R20,000	Odeon
12"		Celebrity (1949-53)	Brown	R30,000	Cetra
10"		Celebrity (1949-53)	Brown	R030,000	Cetra

The Cetra Company is a modern Italian company with an all celebrity catalogue; issues are made also in France, and the U.S.A. by virtue of affiliations.

It seems an appropriate moment to mention that the Italian companies Fonotype and Fonit are not related to Fonotipia. Fonotype was an independent company, mainly celebrity in output—one of their best names was Fernando De Lucia, while Fonit is a modern company mainly of popular products. It is associated with Italian Decca.

(e) *Small English Companies*

Between the Great War and the slump of 1931 many hundreds of small companies flourished, and then disappeared. Only a few of these had aspirations to any but a popular field, and are of no interest to the operatic collector.

Aeolian-Vocalion, Scala, Rena, and Favourite all had celebrity sections, with some good artists: of these, Aeolian-Vocalion was absorbed into Decca, and became simply Vocalion; Rena became a part of Columbia, and the others faded out. Pathe, still a large company in France, produced a few celebrity records on the Actuelle label, as well as the Hill-and-Dale records, with which the company is mainly connected in the mind of the collector. Jumbo and Regal provided discs from just one important artist each: David Bispham and John McCormack respectively.

(f) *Decca, and Associated English Issues*

The Decca group began with the Decca Company in 1926 making purely popular records. It was threatened with extinction in 1931, but the management saved the day by purchasing the English rights of Brunswick. This included a large celebrity catalogue, recorded in America by the electrical method. English issues may be found with the Cliftophone-Brunswick label in gold. The Brunswick catalogue gave Decca enough impetus to carry on, although no more celebrity issues arose from it. During the next decade, important affiliations with Polydor and Bayreuth were made, which gave to the British public the cream of pre-war German celebrity recordings, and also a smaller number of French and Italian recordings. Until after the war Decca had no celebrity artists of its own, at any rate, in the vocal field, and as postwar records are still available, it is principally the Decca-Polydor Series that is of

interest to the collector.

(g) *Polydor, Schallplatte, Opera Disc, Telefunken, and Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft*

This loosely associated group of German companies is important to collectors, not only for the fact that almost all the major artists not recording for Odeon made their records for one or other of the labels concerned, but for the fact that when G. & T. left its Hanover factory, when the Great War was imminent, a number of matrices, especially of German artists, were left behind. Many of these were seized and leased to German companies, and issues from them are to be found with the D.G.G., Schallplatte, and Opera Disc labels.

Records bear a label similar in design to H.M.V., but with Nipper replaced by an enlarged picture of his machine, and both the H.M.V. and a new number.

(h) *Small Continental Companies*

In addition to the above, various small companies on the continent produced vocal records of importance; I think it will suffice merely to list their names, as issues are rarely met with in England: Anker, Cigale Disco-Reale, Favourite, Lyrophone-Nicole, Fonotype spring most readily to mind.

Chapter III

The Value of Records

OF course, I can't tell you just what any record will be worth, nor even give you a system which will enable you to work it out for yourself; but I hope at least to tell you why some are worth very much more than others.

The price is, of course, determined by supply and demand, but I would like to explain a thing or two about demand.

Firstly, an early pressing of a record is usually worth more than a later one, in the same condition; the reasons are exactly the same as that for the high prices of first editions of books: collector's instinct. In the same way that I would love a First Folio, I would love a *Caruso* Zonophone; a Penguin Shakespeare would have the same disappointment as a modern dubbing. Now the three main price grades are

Flush G. & T., G. & T. and H.M.V. Prices for G. & T's are usually much more than for H.M.V's, especially for discs made about 1907 to 1908; for example, *Caruso's* 'Magische Note' is worth about 25s. as a G. & T. and 10s. as an H.M.V. This is due to the fact that the G. & T. label was withdrawn in 1908. Such big jumps apply really only to G. & T's, for other companies do not have the same differences, either in fact or in 'glamour'.

Secondly, we have supply; most best sellers tend to be low priced, as we have seen, and as such, the price of other less selling discs by the same artist may tend to drop.

Thirdly, we have fashion; for fashion, which is often affected by whether the star was 'discogenic' (excuse this, please) can depress many values and boost others out of all reason.

Then, fourthly, we have the attractiveness of the label; it cannot be denied that the labels used by the Gramophone Co. up to 1914 were among the most attractive ever used, while the red labels used after the war are very unpleasant. Coupled with this, we have the glamour attached to some. It is safe to say (indeed, I am very susceptible to it myself) that many discs change hands for no better reason than that they are Fonos, or Flush G. & T's; indeed, I would give good money for any blue Zonophone, if the label was readable, whatever the condition (advert.). For this reason, pink G. & T's are nowhere near so exciting a find as red, and often fetch lower prices than discs of corresponding merit and rarity with the prettier label. It has been hinted, and with some little truth, that the collector of rare records is merely a stamp collector with megalomania.

Lastly, we have the musical merit: I have refrained from mentioning this, as often the best discs have been best-sellers, and even survived till a few years ago; this, as a guide to value, is so much subject to variation by other causes that it's hardly fair to use it. For example, *Caruso's* poorly sung *Che Gelida* is worth more than the well sung *O Mimi, tu piu non torni*, for the simple reason that perhaps a quarter of the number of the duet were sold of it. Coupled with musical value is the fact that operatic excerpts in the correct language tend to be worth more than the same in English, which in turn tend to be worth more than non-operatic items in other

languages, which tend to be worth more than songs, and balladry in English. Only tendencies, of course, but, nevertheless, trends.

There you have a brief guide. By far the best is one's own or someone else's experience, which can be much helped by the study of as many dealer's price lists as possible.

Chapter IV What to Buy

BEFORE I begin this chapter I should like to make it clear that these rules are principally designed for the collector who wishes to make a little money from his searching, and are consequently concerned with the financial rather than the aesthetic values of records concerned, and are consequently not intended as reflections on the artistic merits of the artists concerned, nor on the policies of the companies making the records. If any discredit is alleged, it is designed to fall on the body of collectors as a whole, who frequently refuse to have any truck with well-sung records by artists for the moment out of fashion, while rushing after others with far less artistic value.

Secondly, I should like to add that it has been necessary, in order to avoid swelling this book to unwieldy proportions, to phrase the rules as generally as possible. Although I have called attention to many of the major variations from this rule in a later chapter, naturally it is impossible to call the lot to view. However, I hope that I have not led the tyro into too many blunders.

Lastly, there are many delightful artists whose records are commercially almost valueless, and many more which are worth less than the five shillings, which I have taken as the lower limit, beneath which a record is not worth buying. I have drawn attention to these further on, and I would advise a collector to try over some of them, if the opportunity arises, for a selection makes a pleasant addition to a collection; remember, however, before laying out any great sum of money, that it will be almost impossible to get much of it back, should the need arise.

Now I have cleared the air a little I will proceed.

1. Never, with a very, very few exceptions (which will be dealt with in a later chapter) buy non-vocal or chorus-only records.

2. Refrain, with exceptions to be dealt with in the same chapter, from buying records from complete sets. These may be noted by the fact that they usually bear side numbers somewhere on the label.

3. Contraltos and basses record very badly, and so are to some extent out of favour. Exceptions apply to the G. & T., Fono, light blue Zonophone, and other glamorous labels; in short, to the very best singers only with these types of voice. In consequence, proceed with care.

4. Buy only operatic excerpts, and only when sung in the correct language. Exceptions are to be found on the 'glamorous' labels, and on the Odeon, and Polydor issues. Curiously, there is, at the moment, a vogue for Russian records, and so records in Russian are often safe buys. Languages such as Danish, Icelandic, Flemish, and other 'freaks' are likewise fairly safe. However, leave all records in English severely alone, barring glamour labels.

Before I continue, perhaps I should mention what I mean by the 'glamorous' labels; these comprise all flush, and later coloured G. & T's, Fonos, and blue and orange Zonophones. These, in general, are often bought for the rarity of the label, and many issues that would be disregarded on an H.M.V. label, fetch eager buyers on red G. & T.

I should also add that artists whose records are considered separately have their names printed in BLOCK CAPITALS.

Note.—All the following sections presuppose the above rules to apply. Now for an individual study of the various labels; once again, I would like to emphasise the generality of my remarks.

(a) *Berliner, G. & T., Pre-dog, and H.M.V.*

With Berliner, almost any discs can be assured of a ready sale, for, if they had any label, Berliners would fall into the glamour label class! There are, however, almost no real celebrities, and no very valuable discs are to be found. As a rough guide, it may be taken that Berliners, as well as 7-inch G. & T's that are listed in Bauer (Bauer's Catalogue of Historical Records, 1898-1909) have a value other than glamour.

As regards G. & T. and predog, almost anything on a coloured label is safe (but see TETRAZZINI). With the black label, most operatic items covered by the rules above are fairly safe; curiosities such as the continental double-sided G. & T's are also worth buying, when come across.

During the H.M.V. acoustic period, it is safest to say that only operatic records with coloured labels should be bought, and then not when sung in English. All historical records, however, are safe, as are archives, although the prospect of finding these in a junk-shop is remote for the next few years. Considerably more attention to condition is required here, for often a disc with a G. & T. label will sell, although the same one with an H.M.V. label would not. Much the same applies to electrical records.

A note should be made that many of H.M.V.'s German and Viennese stars recorded electrically for the D. and E. Series. These are worth buying, although otherwise, as with the plum and purple labels, these cheaper types are to be avoided.

(See: BISPHAM, BUTT, CARUSO, CHALIAPIN, GARDEN, GERHARDT, GIGLI, MCCORMACK, MELBA.)

The following table of original prices may prove of interest; prices of records after 1941 are quoted exclusive of purchase tax.

<i>Series</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Single-sided</i>	<i>Double-sided</i>
Red, 10"	1906	5/-	
	1924	3/-	6/-
	1937	2/-	4/-
	1955	2/6	4/6
Red, 12"	1906	10/-	
	1924	4/6	8/6
	1937	3/-	6/-
	1955	3/9	6/9
Black or Plum	1906	2/6	
	1924		3/-
	1937	2/6	3/-
	1955	2/6	3/9
Pink, Patti	1906	21/-	
	1937	12/6	
White 12"	1922	15/-	16/-
	1937		
	1955		

It is clear from this that record purchasing has never been a cheap hobby, and that records are among the few commodities that can, in some instances, be obtained more cheaply than in 1906!

(b) *Columbia*

With this label, as regards the red and gold, and the pink-labelled series, practically any record is safe; it is with the others that care must be taken. It is reasonably safe, however, if the rules at the start are adhered to, as regards the R.W. & B. black and silver and the light blue series. Care should particularly be used when faced with the brown-labelled discs, as these are often extracts from complete sets. The purple series is, for the most part good (but see: BUTT, DAVIES, BURKE, STRACCIARI). With these exceptions, most are safe investments. The black labelled cheaper series is to be avoided, with the exception of discs by STRACCIARI, MCCORMACK, and NASH.

(In addition to the above, see GARDEN and BISPHAM.)

A note may be made here of the method of distinction of electrical recordings. These may be known by the W in a circle, preceding the impression in the wax of the matrix number; this denotes recordings made by the Warner-Brunswick process, and is also found on other makes of record.

Mention may also be made of Rena records, a small firm bought up by Columbia, who re-issued records with either a Columbia-Rena or Regal label. Although little of vocal interest is to be found here, note may be made of certain 'freaks' bearing different labels on either side.

(c) *Regal, Okeh, American Regal, American Odeon*

This group of companies, subsidiaries of Columbia, owe their inclusion in this section of the book to the fact that certain of JOHN MCCORMACK'S records were issued on them. Beyond this, there is nothing of interest on any of them. For a fuller account of these records see under MCCORMACK.

(d) *Aeolian-Vocalion, Favourite, Jumbo, Scala*

Jumbo is included here, for on this label were issued some records of DAVID BISPHAM, under which name in the next chapter a note is given.

The other companies had celebrity series, fed by various

continental companies. There are no great rarities on any of them, but records fulfilling the rules set out at the head of this chapter may pay dividends. You are warned, however, that the demand for such records is much smaller than their numerical rarity.

(See GERHARDT.)

(e) *Fonotipia, Odeon, Parlophone, Cetra*

Firstly, buy any vocal Fono. The cheapest are those by STRACCIARI, and, for some reason that I cannot fathom, De Lucia. These, in fine condition, fetch from 15s., so it will be seen that no doubts need be felt, should they turn up in England.

Now Odeon; the blue celebrity series is always safe, and later Odeons prove a reasonably sure buy if the usual rules are followed. Care should be taken, however, that the items are not available, or, at any rate, only recently deleted, as English Parlophones; the same goes for Cetra. This, of course, only involves the more recent issues.

Parlophone is something of a white elephant. In the days before the war hundreds of sides, some good, some indifferent, and some frankly awful were issued, often sung in wrong languages, and titles only in English, with no reference to the language on the label, and that information often incorrect—when given at all.

One series is clear from all the muddle. This is the Historical Series. Issued just before the war, this was quickly withdrawn. Records came from the Fonotipia and Odeon lists, and were 10 inch, 10½ inch and 12 inch. All, with no exception, are highly desirable, and the prices asked are high.

After that it is advisable to leave all the black labelled discs alone, with the exception of those by Meta Seimeyer, and Ben Sidera—these, by the way, originally appeared with purple labels. The higher priced Odeon Series is fairly safe, with the exception of RICHARD TAUBER and Jan Kiepura. The 12-inch discs by the latter artist should be bought, but the 10 inch should be left alone.

(See also MCCORMACK.)

(f) *Zonophone*

It is quite unnecessary to say that the legendary light blue, dark blue, and orange Zonophones should be bought on sight.

The lucky finder should then stand himself a drink, and write to the papers about it. I may say that though I have heard of many major finds, I have never heard of one of these turning up in England. (I hope that I shall never be shown one of the Regal-Zonophone MF Series, in mistake of one of the 'real thing', it would be too heart-breaking!)

With the other records, it is safe to say with the green Internationals: work to rule; very few are major prizes, but none are completely worthless. With the green and white, and red series, leave severely alone. Also, of course, Regal-Zonophones.

(See: CARUSO, TETRAZZINI.)

(g) *Decca, and Decca-Polydor, Brunswick, and Bayreuth*

I have, for convenience, lumped these associated groups of companies together. The task is not hard. Firstly, the Bayreuth Series is worth about 10s. per disc. Secondly, all vocal Brunswicks with the gold label should be bought, and the black-labelled discs which follow the rules and do *not* fall into the 0100 or 01000 series. The value of these—which are, by the way known as Clifphone-Brunswicks—varies from 5s. to several pounds.

The vocals in the Decca Polydor Series are, for the most part, desirable, and all may be bought if in fine condition; on the other hand, there is very little on the parent Decca label worthy of attention, as virtually everything of merit is still available. The exceptions include Lemeshev, Valente, Rayner, and the deletions by Alfred Piccaver.

(h) *American Columbia, Victor, Decca, Brunswick*

With regard to such of these records as are from time to time found in junk-shops, it is reasonable to say follow the rules and the suggestions given from the English equivalents. It is, however, more in the popular field that attention will need to be given to these records.

(i) *Polydor, Telefunken, Opera Disc, D.G.G., Anker, Schalleplatte*

The same advice may be given for these German issues as to the American ones in the paragraph above, with the exception that the language objection to items sung in German

may be disregarded. Records brought back from Germany by English troops are often met with as well as those fetched from the Channel Islands. It seems that the German Occupation Forces in these islands left many records behind them, and I have made many lucky purchases here.

I'd like to say once more, by way of summing up, that the advice given is deliberately couched in general terms, but I have tried to phrase them so as to cover the bulk of cases likely to occur in the British Isles, both in junk-shopping, and in private buying. Of course, I can't, without making long lists of records to be bought, and records to be left alone, cover every or even the majority of exceptions to these rules. I have tried to describe the more-often-met-with in the next chapter, and also made mention of some artists who, although their records are not a commercial proposition, make good listening.

I'd also like to add, listen to as many vocal records as you have a chance to; although it is likely that I have advised against their purchase above, it may well be that clean copies will prove welcome additions to your own collection.

Lastly, experience is by far the best guide to your buyings, the purpose of this book is to prevent you from burning your fingers overmuch, during the gaining of that experience.

Chapter V

Artists Requiring Special Care

There are a number of artists whose records do not conform to the rules outlined in the previous chapter, for a number of reasons; the main causes of this 'deviationism' are either the popularity of the artists, causing very large sales, or else that the nature of the voices was such that the recording apparatus of the day failed by a great deal to do justice to their technique. In addition some artists made many records of material of indifferent quality which, however well sung, cannot give continued pleasure.

On the other hand, some artists made records which would seem, following the rules, to be of little interest; some recorded for minor companies, and some under pseudonyms. I have endeavoured to give in this chapter some pointers to artists

whose records are touched by one or more of these factors. While I have by no means covered all of them, I think I have covered all the contingencies which the collector will contact, at anyrate during the 'tyro' period.

I have listed the artists in alphabetical order; Emilio de Gogorza, and Perillo de Seguroola are under G and S respectively; this form is correct, although not often followed.

(a) *David BISPHAM*

This artist is an American baritone who recorded for G. & T., Columbia, and several small American companies; issues from the last may be found in England on the Jumbo label. For the most part his records are of oratorio or English balladry, and so might well be passed over in view of the unpromising name. Recently, Bispham has become a fashionable artist, and any record may be sure of a ready purchaser. The Columbias are fairly common, but G. & T. and Jumbos are rare.

(b) *Tom BURKE, and LENGHI-CELLINI*

These two tenors recorded on a variety of labels, including Columbia, Imperial, Piccadilly, and Regal. It cannot be said that there is any great demand for their records, although they made many operatic titles in the correct languages. However, a not inconsiderable pleasure may be found in the more interesting titles, but it should be mentioned that, if you buy for your own collection, it will be difficult to sell them should you desire to do so.

Lenghi-Cellini's records may be found under various forms of this name, such as L. Cellini, Signor Lenghi, Signor Cellini, etc.

(c) *Clara BUTT*

Clara Butt's records suffer from every possible check to value outlined above. Therefore, do not buy.

A pleasant sound can be coaxed out of some of them, however, by judicious choice of playing speed; I have found that some of her Columbias play very well at speeds as high as 83-87!

One record is worth buying for commercial reasons, the Brindisi from 'Lucrezia Borgia', H.M.V. 033010. This is worth about 15s. to £1. It may still be difficult to find a buyer for it, though.

(d) *Enrico CARUSO*

The records of this singer suffer in price for his immense popularity, and it is necessary to leave some of his discs severely alone. We might well advise you to overlook the following classes:

1. All non-operatic titles, with H.M.V. or Dog-monarch labels, except 'Over There', 5-2593, DA121, 87294, or 515. This record, for its endearing nature, is in very great demand. I have quoted the Victor numbers, as many of these were left in England by American troops, in 1919 and 1920.

2. Leave alone the electrical 'Recreations', even when deleted. These may be distinguished by the usual test for electrical recordings.

3. Leave alone certain operatic records that had particularly large sales, and some of which are still available. These are:

Tosca: E lucevan le stelle/Recondita armonia. DA112 7-52002/4.

Pag: Vesti/No pagliaccio. DB111 052159/2-052034.

Aida: Celeste Aida/Salvator Rosa—Mia piccarella. DB144 052224/2-052224.

For the safe records, we may make a brief resume of Caruso's recording career:

In 1898 he made two Pathe cylinders, and followed in 1901 by one more; a second may have been made at this later session, but no trace remains. These cylinders were re-issued as Pathe, and Emerson Hill-and-Dale discs, and as Emerson cylinders. In cylinder form these items are major rarities worth many pounds; in disc form they are still rare, but are worth only about 5% of the cylinder price.

Probably in 1902 Caruso made seven light blue Zonophones. All, of course, are very rare.

After these semi-legendary discs we come to the G. & T. and Victor recordings, which are not infrequently met with, and only a few are very rare.

Caruso made, between 1902 and 1904, twenty-two G. & T's in Milan. Thirteen sides of these were re-issued in the Historical Series. In any form they are likely to be expensive, although certain, even in G. & T. form, are quite common. Any disc, of course, is well worth buying from this series, and two, *Non piu nobile*, 52419, and the *'Iris' Serenade*, 52368, are very rare. Prices for the others range from one to five guineas.

Caruso made all his other records for Victor, and most of those that achieved double-sided form were available for many years. All of the February, 1904 session, matrix numbers 994-1002, are rare; any G. & T. is scarce, but otherwise, except for the Caruso-Melba *Soave Fanciulla*, there are no high-priced discs. All except those listed above are well worth buying, however.

(e) *Feodor CHALIAPIN*

The records of this bass are under the same cloud as that which shades those of Clara Butt. Except for the very rare G. & T's only the 'actualités', recorded at Covent Garden, and the concerted items enjoy much demand.

(f) *Ben DAVIES*

Another singer of the so frequently met-with category of best-sellers, Ben Davies's only records that are financially a good proposition are the 1901 G. & T's, which are not infrequently met with, bearing the original flush label. These, in fine condition, fetch about 10s. The Columbias are worth very little.

(g) *Geraldine FARRAR*

The voice of this charming singer took very badly to the recording studio, and there is very little demand for her solo records, with the exception of some excerpts from Carmen, which still only command low prices.

(h) *Mary GARDEN*

After a series of 'don'ts' it is most pleasant to say 'do'. The discs of Miss Garden, G. & T's or Columbia's may be bought without fear, notwithstanding the unprepossessing nature of some of the titles.

(i) *Elena GERHARDT*

Again we have a singer whose records should always be bought. The majority of her output is of Lieder, although she made a few operetta records. She also made many records which appear on Aeolian-Vocalion. Her Lieder records fetch from 10s. to 25s. for the normal H.M.V's; G. & T's are worth slightly more, and the plum is the Wolf Society album, which fetches £13 to £14. She made a number of records which were sponsored by Collectors' Corner; these are still available, but owing to their high price new command a good second-hand value, especially from Americans.

(j) *Beniamino GIGLI*

Gigli is another very prolific recorder, and most of his records are still available. There is a great demand for his pre-electric recordings, and they fetch good prices. These are the only ones to command figures above 10s., and the electric deletions, being of film tunes, may be neglected.

(k) *Eduardo di GIOVANNI*

This imposing name shelters the identity of Columbia's Edward Johnson. Although his few records are awful, owing to the nature of the singer, they fetch worthwhile prices, and, as with Florence Foster Jenkins, there is a demand for them as freaks! It is safe to say, though, that anyone buying one of Giovanni's records will never want to play it after the first time.

(l) *Emilio de GOGORZA*

Mention of this artist is made mainly for the fact that many of his records were made under the name of 'Signor Franciso', or 'Francesco'. With the exception of these, his G. & T's and concerted items, his records, although usually well sung, attract neither high prices nor great demand.

(m) *John McCORMACK*

Many of the records of Count John McCormack do not make good purchases for the same reasons as Caruso's do not. I would like to start with an outline of what to buy.

McCormack started his recording career with a selection of G. & T's. These are very rare. These were roughly contemporaneous with a variety of cylinders for Pathe and others, some of which were re-issued as discs. The cylinders are very rare, the discs scarce.

The commonest 'buy at sight' block are the Odeons, made from 1907-8. These were repressed in Italy, England, and America on a variety of labels; I have listed these in an approximate order of scarcity: English Regal and Columbia, Fonotipia, American Regal, Columbia, Odeon and Okeh. These records are worth from 10s. upwards, according to nature and scarcity of label.

Of the flock of H.M.V's and Victors we can only say that the operatic, Lieder and electrical deletions are the only safe buys, along with a few French and Italian songs. Of the rest, some are very good: experience is necessary here. There

is, however, a firm demand for the 'other languages' items.

(n) *Nellie MELBA*

The immense popularity of Melba's records, coupled with the fact that recording did not take well to her voice, accounts for their lack of demand and low price. However, the G. & T's and electrical records, especially of her farewell performance, may be bought with confidence.

(o) *Heddle NASH*

This English tenor has a delicacy of tone comparable in type with that of Tito Schipa; coinciding with the disappearance of many of them from the catalogues comes a new popularity for his records. Most of his operatic discs, including the more substantial extracts from sets, although sung for the most part in English, prove worth buying. None, however, fetches more than about 10s., and many as little as 3s.

(p) *Perille de SEGUROLA*

A bass who sung at the Met. during the early part of the century, Segurolo is now enjoying a new popularity. His records are to be found in the black label H.M.V. series, being doubled as E and D records. He is often to be found in the bass roles of concerted items of higher-priced colours.

(q) *Riccardo STRACCIARI*

Stracciari was a fine baritone, whose records have gone the way of all best-sellers. Before I start, I would recommend all his records as being extremely well sung.

Stracciari started as a Fono artist, and, although none of these records are ever cheap, his are as near as any of them get to being so: prices are about 10s. to 15s. He appears, by virtue of these sessions, in the Parlophone Historical Series.

These were followed by a long string of pre-electric Columbias on the purple label, which are very common; then came a small number of electrics on light blue labels, and appearances in sets of Rigoletto and Barbieri, after which came some dark blue electrics. Although these make good listening, it cannot be said that any of Stracciari's Columbias make good investing.

(r) *Richard TAUBER*

Tauber recorded an enormous number of sides for Odeon; in fact he probably appeared in the studios more than any other serious singer. The immense field, together with the fact

that most of his output was of a rather lighter nature, has made his records rather neglected.

There is a demand for his pre-electrics, and for the deleted operatic items and Lieder, when accompanied on the piano, but the majority of electrics, most available until recently, fetch only low prices, especially when sung in English.

Like Stracciari and others, Tauber's records are to be bought for one's own collection rather than for speculation. The best are, of course, his Mozart arias, and the majority of German recordings make pleasant listening; of the welter of English items, the bulk are not of lasting interest, but exception should be made for one, which, like Caruso's *Over There*, has, so to speak, 'caught on'. This is *Sleepy Lagoon/All the Things You Are*, Parlophone RO20492, which is a charmer.

(s) *Conchita SUPERVIA*

Supervia was not a very good singer: she had a vibrato, which would put any other singer back to school, and she had a habit of frequently disregarding the score; in addition, she was, in many of her records, wildly miscast (they include her as Hansel, Cherubino, Seibel, and Musetta). It cannot be denied, however, that she was a great singer, and her records are in a consequently great demand. Any should be bought.

(t) *Luisa TETRAZZINI*

With 'Tet' we come to the great singer whose records sold very well but who did not take to the studio, and often sang items of little musical interest; in addition, some of her Mozart singing is very poor. Her first set of records, for Zonophone, are perhaps her best to listen to, when played at the correct speed, and certainly her rarest; these should always be bought. Her H.M.V's, and for that matter pre-dogs, are for the most part disappointing, though some (notably *Fors a lui* and *Sempre Libra*) make good listening. Most of them undeniably demonstrate sensational agility. The H.M.V's should not be purchased as a speculation, owing to the small demand.

Chapter VI

Miscellaneous Records of Value

IN this chapter I would like to clear up all the records of a classical nature, and those related: dramatic, poetry, etc. These

are all those of a 'serious' nature for which provision has not been made above.

The first group of all consists of the non-vocal records. These, with the advent of L.P., have become obsolete. For good or bad, it is safe to say that it is only the collector who buys a non-vocal record today, at the old speed, and this is emphasised by the fact that the vast majority of more serious 78's have been deleted.

It must also be said that the number of collectors of such material is very small, and consequently I would advise the reader to whom this book is directed, unless he has actually been furnished with a want-list and a guaranteed market, to shy off non-vocal records. There are a few for which the demand is great enough to justify purchase and I shall endeavour to outline these.

Firstly, orchestral. Now about the only pre-electric records which should be bought are those by Artur Nikisch or Toscanini; of the electric era, about the only collector's conductors are Toscanini, Richard Strauss, and Mengelberg, and many of the records of these are common, especially those of Toscanini. Perhaps it would be better to say: collect single records, but not sets, of Toscanini, in the D Series, only; of Strauss, on German records, and of Mengelberg on those other than Columbias.

Now instrumental. To a certain extent red G. & T's and Fonos are saleable, though not at high prices. For the rest I can only give a brief list of pianists for whose discs there is a demand: Busoni, De Pachmann, other than H.M.V.'s; Gieseking, other than Columbia's; Grieg; Saint-Saens; and also the violin records of Sarasate. Warning should be given that prices are rarely high, although Busoni's records are sometimes worth good money.

Of the rest I can only repeat advice which was first given, I think, by Kennedy, "leave severely alone".

Of operatic sets we must treat yet. Until the coming of L.P. these were in normal demand, but now alas are more or less worthless. There is, however, some demand for the following:

Faust, with Destinn.

Boccaccio, pre-electric, no particular stars.

Carmen, with Destinn.

Trovatore, and *Aida*, with Pertile.

Faust, with Journet.

Werther, and *Manon*, with Thill, Vallin, etc.

Pagliacci, with Paoli, Cigada, etc., under the composer.

Faust, a concise recording, with Caruso, Farrar, etc.

Marta, ditto.

Of these the last two sell as if they were separate discs, rather than parts of sets; the others, either the 'spot' arias, or else as complete sets, as there is little demand for the intervening passages alone. Prices are low; about 5s. a disc is fair for the first six sets, *Pag* is worth from 3s. 6d. to 17s. 6d., according to the music and label colour, and *Faust* and *Marta*, with Caruso, are worth about 10s. to 15s. per side.

About the only other 'sets' worth mentioning are the many albums of extracts from the *Ring*, which appeared on the D and DB labels of H.M.V. about 1927-1930. These are albums of selected passages, rather than connected sets, although often complete stretches lasting over several sides were recorded. There was a total of about seventy discs, and any vocal one is worth buying. The value is a fairly consistent 4s. 6d., with a jump for Schorr's recording of the *Abscheid* to 20s.—25s. the pair. Odd discs, scenes, or albums are well worth buying.

This seems as appropriate a point as any to mention the Society issues, sponsored by H.M.V., Columbia and Parlophone. Of these, *The Wolf*, Volume I, has been mentioned; and the Beethoven Sonatas, and Haydn String Quartets, Volumes I and II, in each case, have been also deleted for some time. The sonatas have been re-issued, and only just re-deleted, and none of these last four volumes fetch high prices.

The remaining volumes have recently been deleted *en bloc*, and it seems too early to say whether they will ever command high prices. It seems safe to say that the non-vocal volumes will be eventually superseded, and will not fetch good figures, and as the operas are, in some cases, being re-issued as L.P.'s, the same may be said for them. The volumes of *Leider* seem to be the ones to watch, and even if these are re-issued, they will not be so completely redundant as the others. These, when as sometimes happens, found at a low price in a junk-shop or at an auction, may be bought safely. At any rate their

high artistic value will ensure a demand for them if the price does not rise to match the Wolf, Volume I.

Lastly, we have choral records; it cannot be said that these, either choruses from opera, or of choral music proper, command any sort of following as they are rendered completely obsolete by the advent of L.P. There is, however, some demand for discs on the 'glamour' labels, Fonotipia and red G. & T, but prices are usually below 10s.—well below.

Now we must consider non-musical records. These consist, in short, of dramatic records, political speeches, and also of monologues and the like, which are better described as 'personality' items.

The interest in these is decidedly low, and only one artist comes to mind whose records fetch good prices: Sarah Bernhardt. Of the rest some, no doubt, might, but I would advise rather to play for safety as the market is so limited as to enforce low prices. It is hard to imagine, for example, what would be found to excite much interest in, to quote some examples from the H.M.V. Historical Catalogue: *Gas Shells Bombardment*, 09308; *Hunting Calls/Adrift on an Ice Flow*, D376; and so on, except for the purpose of reference libraries.

Anyway, even if you did come across them, I don't feel that you would get much money for them.

To conclude this miscellaneous chapter I would like to say a few words about record catalogues, supplements, covers and books. These can often be of great value. The price which a catalogue fetches depends mainly on its age, and I think that the picture may be best summed up on a table. Of course there is a considerable tolerance to these figures, and the demand varies, but I would say that almost any pre-1945 catalogue will eventually find a home. This table is based on figures that I have seen asked, or asked myself; for dates not mentioned interpolations should be made. Before 1920, and for any foreign catalogue, prices are much more flexible, and I have thought it safer to omit any definite statement.

	1920	1925	1930	1935	1940	1945
H.M.V.	30/-	17/6	12/6	10/-	5/-	3/6
Columbia	20/-	15/-	10/-	7/6	4/-	1/9
Parlophone	—	10/-	9/-	6/-	3/-	1/-
Decca	—	—	5/-	4/-	3/6	1/-
Aeolian Vocalion	13/6	—	—	—	—	—

Pre-Great War catalogues usually fetch from three guineas upwards, and pre-1900, ten or more.

Supplements are much more difficult to price. Celebrity items, issued to celebrate visits to the country, or to commemorate death, usually fetch from 1s. to 5s.; others from 1d. upwards. These are best dealt with as bundles of a dozen or a hundred.

Covers by themselves are not really saleable, but a pre-1910 disc is worth a premium of about 1s., if it is in contemporary bag, clean and unturned. It is, therefore, worth keeping any that you meet with for future 'marriages'.

As regards books the principle item is the "Opera at Home". This appeared in three volumes, covering single, double sided and electric recordings, and also in a cheaper edition, without photographs. Clean copies of the illustrated volumes are worth about 25s., 20s. and 30s., for the respective editions, and the non-illustrated, about half that.

Of magazines, most pre-1930 record magazines are worth looking out for, but prices are unstable. Early advertisements of the G. & T., and other companies, dating before 1910, are of interest, especially when bearing photographs of artists. The Patti and Melba advertisements of 1905-7 are well worth watching for, and are not uncommon. They look well framed.

Chapter VII

Hill-and-Dale, and Cylinder Records

It is difficult to say much about the market potential for these records, as the interest in them is of comparatively recent date, but it may be said that as a long-term investment they have a great future.

Their history is somewhat muddled. The first cylinders appeared about 1896, and they were, it seems, considered more as being for business purposes, as the modern dictaphone is used, and for use in the forerunner of the juke box. Incidentally, it is worth noting that Guiseppe de Luca made his first recordings, under all sorts of pseudonyms, most of them famous ones, for the Italian company called Nickleodeon!

It was soon seen that the cylinder had a large potential sale for home entertainment, and by the end of the century there were many companies, both on the continent and in the

U.S.A., making them. Types varied: the general one played about two minutes, but there was a 'long-playing' type which lasted for four. Many machines were also capable of recording on to cylinders that had been shaved off; this resulted in the destruction of many records. The vast majority of these cylinders are numerically very rare, owing both to this and to their fragility.

Despite the many celebrities who made cylinders they did not maintain their initial popularity, and in 1906 such companies as still remained manufactured discs. By far the commonest are Pathes, and Edisons are often found. I will not go into a detailed description of these: it may be of use to know that the numbers used on the cylinders were retained for each side of the disc, and that many issues could be obtained in 8-inch, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch, 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch or 14-inch sizes, or in some, or perhaps only one of them. The difference is to be found in the volume. To some extent, a choice of couplings was available. By no means all of the cylinders were issued as discs, nor were all the discs on sale as cylinders.

The demand for Hill-and-Dale recordings gradually fell, and in 1926 Pathe stopped their production. But the stocks, both of machines, discs and cylinders, still remained, and even today it is possible to find in the older established gramophone shops, a store of cylinders—a point well worth noting.

There are many reasons for the downfall of the Hill-and-Dale system: perhaps the major one was the lack of standardisation. There were, as I have mentioned, several types of cylinder, which meant that adaptors had to be fitted or removed from machines. In the discs the same trouble occurred: Pathes could only be played with a Pathe sound-box, while Edisons needed another; speeds varied enormously, some played at 65, while Pathes varied from 90—100, and many gramophones were incapable of touching either extreme. The grooves on Pathes were very shallow, and the sound-box frequently jumped out of them; surface noise was even heavier than on needle-cut discs, and is comparable to a tube train in a tunnel. And, on top of that, artists of quality recorded much balladry, and worse!

However, these records are of importance; many great singers made all, or at any rate the bulk of their records by the system, and the recording gear was fairly portable. As a

result of this, actualities—such as the famous Mapleson cylinders—were made, and are of the upmost documentary importance. On the Mapleson recordings are to be found, for example, the only recorded examples of the voice of Jean de Rezke. As may be expected, however, the majority of such recordings that are still in existence have long ago been placed in archives or museums, or found their way into a private collection.

As regards the financial side of such items, as I mentioned, the market is by no means stable, and only the most general lines can be pointed out. One might almost say: buy any vocal cylinder, with the possible exception of such items as balladry by Peter Dawson, Andrew Black, and the like, and comic songs. But almost any 'proper' song is worth at least the few pence that are usually asked. Operatic cylinders, and records made by major celebrities are much more valuable, and are mainly worth from 10s. to 70s., with a few pricing as high as £30.

Discs, owing to their less fragile nature, are much more often found, and consequently worth much less. Here one cannot repeat the advice given above; one has to be much more choosy. Non-operatic material should be treated with care; a check on the status of the singer and of his or her needle-cut discs is desirable. Operatic items fetch from about 3s., with the majority of 'celebrities' in the 10s. to 15s. class, and a few above this. The highest I have ever seen asked was 35s. for a Caruso coupling. The potential market is at the moment much smaller than for needle-cut discs, and Hill-and-Dale items would be better put aside as long-term investments.

Chapter VIII

Shopping for Popular Records

I PROPOSE to say very little about this as there are few great prizes to be found, and even more because the search is far more a matter of experience; almost the only 'book learning' that is of use is to be found in the well-known, but incomplete (and now out of print) "Junk-shopper's Discography". This is shortly to be replaced by a new guide, which will be compiled by Arthur Gainsbury, of 47, Alderney Road, Mile End, London, E.1. Collectors are advised not to make serious

search without one or both of these books as guide. However, I do propose to give some general hints:

(a) Jazz

As I hinted in the first chapter, these consist mainly of records either issued under pseudonyms, and/or including one good soloist in a band of no other interest. It will help to start off with a list of bands and musicians:

California Ramblers	Original Memphis Five	Ted Lewis
Georgians	(OM5)	Jean Goldkette
Tennessee Ten	Charleston Chasers	Lanin Orchestra
Benson Orchestra	Paul Whiteman	Indiana Five
Dorsey Groups	Selvin Orchestra	Fred Hall's Sugar
Red-Heads	Nicholls Groups	Babies
	Henderson Orchestra	

Musicians:

Dorsey Brothers	Armstrong	Waller
Bix Biederbecke	Mole	Venuti
Nicholls	Goodman	Lang
	Pettis	

Singers with hot accompaniment:

Ruth Etting	Annette Hanshaw
Cliff Edwards (Ukelele Ike)	Frances Langford
	Noble Sissle

These lists are by no means exhaustive, and when one considers this, the scope of the subject is seen.

The pseudonyms encountered include:

The Denza Dance Band, Corona D.O., Hollywood D.O., Regal D.O., Ariel D.O., Wabash D.O., Carnival D.O., Southern D.O., and so on *ad infinitum*.

Now by no means all of the pseudonyms given cover the identity of hot groups; further, the same recording may have been issued on more than one label, under different pseudonyms, or different ones under the same pseudonym, title and number; and bands may appear under their own name, or other bands under the same name. (Many called themselves "California Ramblers".) One begins now to see that a guide book is a necessity: it has been estimated that the number of sides recorded, that have been issued in this way, may be anything up to 5,000.

All one can say is that anything that is a foxtrot might be good. I would here give a tip: most of the pleasure in having

these records is in the fact that one found it oneself. The demand, therefore, is not large, and prices are usually between 6d. and 1s. Some are more expensive and more saleable: OM5 discs are worth from 3s. 6d. up; Bix-with-Whiteman the same; O.D.J.B. from 3s. 6d. to £2, Hendersons from 5s. to 15s., but these are the exception rather than the rule. Therefore, I say, buy a book and go out and hunt for your own cupboard.

(b) Personality Records

What can I say about these? Very little, but that the position is even more so than with jazz records, as far as price goes. All I can do is to give a list of saleable artists, with prices and a list of definitely impossible-to-sell artists, and leave it at that.

Saleable artists: (a few safer choices)

Bing Crosby: from 2s. 6d. (Note also often included in Whiteman records, but called merely 'Vocal Chorus'.)

Noel Coward: from 2s. *Yvonne Printemps*: from 5s. *Jack Buchanan*: from 2s. *Marlene Dietrich*: from 5s. *Jessie Matthews*: from 2s. 6d. *Sousa's Band*: from 1s. *Al Bowley* (with *Ray Noble*): from 1s. 6d. *Fred Astaire*: from 2s. *George Gershwin*: from 1s. 6d.

Columbia musical comedy records in 3000, 4000, 5000, 9000, L1000, F1000 series: from 2s.

Banjo solos and duets in general: from 1s.

Impossible artists: (for example)

Harry Lauder, *Gracie Fields*, *Charlie Kunz*, *Moreton Downey*, *George Metaxa*, *Gilbert and Sullivan* records in general.

This last list doesn't mean to say they can't sell; it is just that they are of the utmost difficulty.

Well, there you have it, and all I can say is "The best of luck"—you'll need it!

Chapter IX

Where to Find Your Records

THERE are any amount of possible sources of records; the obvious one is the junk-shop. This is, of course, the most satisfying field, for a junk-shop has the appearance of a place

where there *ought* to be good finds. The generic term 'junk-shop' covers a variety of types of establishment; the junk-shop proper, which has a miscellany of second-hand objects in stock covered in dust, and most of them quite worthless; the wireless shop, which deals mainly in second-hand and ex-government components; the shop which likes to be known as an antique shop, but has a few discs and books hidden away, because the owner can't resist a bargain when he sees one; and the proper antique shop, whose owner can't resist a bargain anyway! This last usually is rather ashamed of the records, constituting as they do a loss of prestige, and they are usually tucked away for known customers. I can well testify that if you can become a 'known customer' you can get much better material here than any other way, for the owner of the shop usually has some critical faculties, and may secure really worthwhile stuff for you.

In addition to the shops there are the sale rooms; but here one usually has to buy a large number of unwanted discs, and as often as not a gramophone as well. Of course, anything that is unwanted can usually be sold to a junk-shop! Lastly, there is the advertisement column of local papers, which, coupled with the post-card advertisement frames often seen outside shops, may yield treasures of no little price.

One safe rule can be given: never pass by a potential source of material.

In addition to the foregoing, there is, of course, the legitimate dealer and collector from whom you may buy; the snag is, of course, that you will have to pay pretty near as much as the disc is worth! However, always scan lists as you may see a bargain. It may well be that you are submitted lists to make offers on; the convention is to make a full value offer for anything you may require for your own collection, and about half market value for material for stock; owing to overheads this does not give anywhere near such a large profit as may be apparent to the tyro.

One rule should be stressed firmly; always be polite and friendly; believe me, a little courtesy can pay big dividends. Likewise, don't hesitate to let slip a shilling or two when you are bargaining for a lot which you hope will yield 500% profit anyway; it may put you into favour with the seller, and be amply repaid later. It should be remembered that

although many antique dealers and shops selling new discs have a second-hand pile, if they have not they may feel insulted, and a list of 'cover requirements' in the way of out-of-the-way discs, or of such things as fibre needles, which will come in useful, is handy to carry in your head; while you are being served look around for the pile.

A word about the etiquette of buying from collectors should be given. Firstly, make offers 'subject to approval', and allow for the fact that you may have to supply a box. Secondly, offer a credit note instead of cash. It is common to raise your offer by 10% when doing so.

One last word of warning: do not buy gramophones, if you can avoid it; if you do, be prepared to reckon the value of it as dead loss, for they are almost unsaleable.

Perhaps I should say now, don't expect hordes of red G. & T's, nor to make twenty pound a week. During the last year I have bought just one red G. & T., and that for 13s. 9d., and turned over perhaps 20,000 discs. However, with luck, it is quite possible to make £40 a year; your trading should be considered as pocket money rather than living money. But the good purchases come in lots, frequently an album from a collection, or a box of discs that is worth its weight in—well, shellac at anyrate. One such box, for which I gave 30s., contained just fifteen discs, including the *Caruso-Melba* duet, ten other good *Carusos*, and a *Ruffo*. Once I was offered an album by a gipsy who had let it fall out of the van on to the road. As a result all but two were broken! But one of these was a *Selma Kurz* Polydor, the other a D.G.G. of *De Lucia*! Of the broken ones not one would have been worth 6d. The very day after this I rounded up another of the *Caruso-Melba*, and three *Patti G. & T's* for 50s.—from a dealer of all people.

This will show you that you have always to be on your guard, and always to be persistent; that is the only way to make sure of never letting anything slip. (Never?—well, hardly ever.)

Chapter X

Selling Your Records

SELLING usually starts off with an advertisement, if you conduct it privately. The types followed by the average seller

are two: the 'small ad.', at so much per word, and the cheaper duplicated advert. which allows for full listing. The first type of advert. goes into magazines which are not wholly devoted to advertising, and the cost may well be high. In view of this, naturally, expense is to be avoided by cutting the number of words. In addition, it should be remembered that the resulting sales will depend very much on the temper of the reader of the advertisement. If this sounds a little obscure, let me explain.

To the average rather parsimonious man it can be very irritating to read small ads. where words have been wasted. As an example of what I mean, consider how silly it is to put 'write' when you advertise under a box number; it is equally silly to put "send for list" when this is the only possible way to find out what is being offered, and 'S.A.E.' is equally wasteful, for some persons always do, and some never do, so you simply lose the benefit of their custom.

Perhaps one of the most infuriating habits of all is to quote a list of discs, thus:

Caruso: 2-034018, DA107, DB120, DK103; Melba: 033018; Gigli: DB858, etc.

Now, very, very few people, even if they do possess them, can be bothered to dig out the necessary catalogues to find out what is on these discs. Naturally, a full listing, unless you are offering just half a dozen super rarities, is impossibly expensive. By far the most successful method is to word it thus: "Collectors' vocals, cheaper types, low prices; Box 000". If you give an address, you may like to put "please write"; similarly, one may insert such phrases as "Trade for L.P."; "Records sent abroad," "London district," "Callers welcome," etc., but never waste your own money, or other people's tempers, whatever you do. It is only necessary to look through the columns of the "Gramophone" to see immediately the point at which I am driving.

The second type of advertisement is commonly made in one of the duplicated magazines which exist solely to carry the advertisements of subscribers. These are much cheaper, and it is often very lucrative to insert part or all of your disposal list in full. If this is done, all that is otherwise necessary is to insert at the top a brief note as to postage charges, packing material, and so on. Such a heading would read:

Address.

"Postage, 1s. 6d. under £2. Returnable boxes available. Please write before sending cash. Trade offers, and disposal lists welcomed."

Instead of this, you may like to only mention that you have records for sale, invite or put off callers, and offer lists.

Since you will have to supply lists of disposals to the people answering your advertisement, it would be as well to tell how to make one out. It is best, and clearest, to tabulate it, and convention indicates the following, or some similar form:

Artist, title of one side—title of other. Label, number, condition, price. As for artist, first sort out all your discs into alphabetical order of artists, with concerted items under the tenor, or soprano, in most cases. The title may well be abbreviated; the opera name may be left out, if well known; this is as well, for reasons of space saving, for you will have only about forty letters in which to put it, and *Vesti, E lucevan, Che gelida*, however objectionable they may be, are unmitigable. Now we have the label indication, which is almost always given by an abbreviation. These are more or less standard, and I have given a selection of them below. (The fact that there is some thousand labels need not be of great concern, for the following contain, I hope, all the common ones.)

<i>Aco.</i> : Aco	<i>Cap.</i> : Capitol	<i>El.</i> : Electrola
<i>Act.</i> : Actuelle	<i>Ce.</i> : Cetra	<i>Ep.</i> : Epic
<i>AM.</i> : American music	<i>Cen.</i> : Century	<i>Eso.</i> : Esoteric
<i>All.</i> : Allegro	<i>Cl.</i> : Circle	<i>Esq.</i> : Esquire
<i>Apo.</i> : Apollo	<i>Co.</i> : Columbia	<i>Fel.</i> : Felstead
<i>Arg.</i> : Argo	<i>Col.</i> : Coliseum	<i>Filmo.</i> : Filmophone
<i>Ari.</i> : Ariel	<i>Com.</i> : Commodore	<i>Fo.</i> : Fonotipia
<i>Atl.</i> : Atlantic	<i>Cor.</i> : Coral	<i>Folk.</i> : Folkways
<i>Ban.</i> : Banner	<i>De.</i> : Decca	<i>G. & T.</i> : Gramophone
<i>BB.</i> : Bluebird	<i>Del.</i> : Delysée	and Typewriter Co.
<i>B'cast.</i> : Broadcast	<i>DGG.</i> : Deutsche	<i>Ge.</i> : Gennett
<i>Bel.</i> : Beltona	Grammophon	<i>Gen.</i> : General
<i>Bilt.</i> : Biltmore	<i>Dom.</i> : Dominion	<i>GG.</i> : Grey Gull
<i>Bn.</i> : Bluenote	<i>DT.</i> : Ducretet-Thomson	<i>GTT.</i> : Good Time Jazz
<i>Br.</i> : Brunswick		<i>Gu.</i> : Guardsman
<i>BS.</i> : Black Swan	<i>Du.</i> : Durium	<i>Ha.</i> : Harmony
<i>BP.</i> : Black Patti	<i>Duo.</i> : Duophone	<i>HaR.</i> : Harmony Re-
<i>BSt.</i> : Blue Star	<i>Ed.</i> : Edison	issue
<i>Bull.</i> : Bull Dog	<i>EB.</i> : Edison Bell	<i>HMV.</i> : His Master's
<i>Ca.</i> : Cameo	<i>EBW.</i> : Edison Bell	Voice
<i>Cam.</i> : Camden	Winner	<i>Homo.</i> : Homochord

<i>Imp.</i> : Imperial	<i>Met.</i> : Metronome	<i>Rex.</i> : Rex
<i>IRCC.</i> : International Record Collector's Club	<i>MGM.</i> : Metro Goldwin Meyer	<i>Riv.</i> : Riverside
<i>Ja.</i> : Jazz	<i>Mon.</i> : Monarch	<i>Rivi.</i> : Riviera
<i>JB.</i> : John Bull	<i>Mus.</i> : Musicord	<i>RWB.</i> : Red, White and Blue
<i>JCL.</i> : Jazz Classic	<i>Ng.</i> : Norgran	<i>RZ.</i> : Regal-Zonophone
<i>JCo.</i> : Jazz Collector	<i>NGS.</i> : National Gramophone Society	<i>Sav.</i> : Savoy
<i>JDoc.</i> : Jazz Documentary	<i>Ni.</i> : Nixa	<i>Sig.</i> : Signature
<i>JL.</i> : Jazz Information	<i>Od.</i> : Odeon	<i>See.</i> : Seeco
<i>JM.</i> : Jazz Man	<i>OK.</i> : Okeh	<i>SIW.</i> : Sitting in with
<i>JP.</i> : Jazz Parade	<i>OL.</i> : Oiseau Lyre	<i>Sup.</i> : Supraphon
<i>JSel.</i> : Jazz Selection	<i>Or.</i> : Oriole	<i>Sw.</i> : Swing
<i>JSo.</i> : Jazz Society	<i>Pa.</i> : Parlophone	<i>Te.</i> : Tempo
<i>Ki.</i> : King	<i>Pac.</i> : Pacific	<i>Tel.</i> : Telefunken
<i>KJ.</i> : King Jazz	<i>Pana.</i> : Panachord	<i>Ult.</i> : Ultraphon
<i>Leva.</i> : Levaphone	<i>Pe.</i> : Perfect	<i>Ur.</i> : Urania
<i>LJ.</i> : London Jazz	<i>Phi.</i> : Phillips	<i>Van.</i> : Vanguard
<i>Lo.</i> : London	<i>Pm.</i> : Paramount	<i>V-D.</i> : V-Disc
<i>LoL.</i> : London International	<i>PmR.</i> : Paramount Reissue	<i>VDy.</i> : Van Dyke
<i>May.</i> : Mayfair	<i>Po.</i> : Polydor	<i>WC.</i> : West Coast
<i>Me.</i> : Melotone	<i>PoD.</i> : Decca-Polydor	<i>Win.</i> : Winner
<i>Mel.</i> : Melodisc	<i>Rad.</i> : Radiex	<i>Vi.</i> : Victor
<i>Mer.</i> : Mercury	<i>Re.</i> : Regal	<i>Voc.</i> : Vocalion
	<i>Rem.</i> : Remington	<i>Vog.</i> : Vogue
		<i>Zo.</i> : Zonophone

That make the 127 labels that you are likely to meet. These now have suffixes indicating the country of origin. Here some difficulty is involved, as certain companies are mentioned without any prefix, their origin being taken for granted. I have underlined English companies, whose English issues are left unsuffixed. Other than these, lack of suffix implies American origin.

The country suffixes are as follows:

<i>Am.</i> : American	<i>D.</i> : Danish	<i>It.</i> : Italian
<i>Ar.</i> : Argentine	<i>E.</i> : English	<i>J.</i> : Japanese
<i>Au.</i> : Australia	<i>F.</i> : French	<i>M.</i> : Malayan
<i>B.</i> : Belgium	<i>G.</i> : German	<i>N.</i> : Norwegian
<i>C.</i> : Canadian	<i>Gr.</i> : Greek	<i>R.</i> : Russian
<i>Chi.</i> : Chinese	<i>H.</i> : Dutch	<i>Swe.</i> : Swedish
<i>Cz.</i> : Czechoslovakian	<i>In.</i> : Indian	<i>Sw.</i> : Swiss
	<i>Ir.</i> : Irish	

Following the make we have the record number, which presents no difficulty. Note that it should always be given in full, including the lettered prefix or suffix.

Then the condition code. There is a conventionally accepted

code, but as it allows seventeen grades of condition, and collectors can never agree whether it should be applied visually or aurally—the former is gaining preference, for it negatives effects caused by varieties of gramophone, and pressing variations. But the code in its full glory is far too inclusive. It is also rather misleading in terminology, for a record described as 'good' is really pretty dreadful.

The full listing is:

N—new; E—excellent; V—very good; G—good; F—fair; P—poor. This may be added to by the use of plus or minus signs.

Here I'm going to stick my neck out by advocating a 'short form' which is generally used, and generally understood, and add comments on the appearance.

NEW (in words)—unplayed.

N, E+ or E. As good as new, *no wear* visible, but dirt is permitted on E.

V. Some wear visible, but not really audible. V+ is just a little better than this, and V— a bit worse.

G. Decidedly off, scratched or worn, but not too bad to listen to; the sort of disc that one would keep until something better came along.

F. Very off, digs, repeating grooves, and the like.

P. Worse still. This grade is very rarely used, as few discs can be much worse than the rest.

Now I'd like to say that this is my view of what the majority of collectors think the terms mean; naturally, some are optimistic, and some pessimistic about their discs; I have just tried to hit the happy mean. Some dealers have their own personal code, and lists should be carefully read for this.

In addition, the following terms should be noted:

Flake: A portion of the disc taken away on one or both sides, but the shadow of the disc is still unbroken.

Bite: A piece broken out.

Chip: Can mean either of the above.

For preference and clarity, *flake* or *bite* should be used, and the number of grooves broken mentioned.

Lc.—lamination crack: A crack caused by poor material, and not showing on both sides.

Cr.—crack: A crack caused by rough handling, and visible on both sides. A hair crack is a narrow one, and a label crack

radiates from the hole, being often covered by, but visible through the label. "Cracked to label" means one going from the rim inwards.

Dig: A blemish on the grooves, caused by dropping the needle heavily.

Rough label: Label torn, dirty or marked by the needle. This, and complete absence of label, should be mentioned.

Lastly, there is the price; this you will have to settle for yourself. I have dropped a few hints in the previous chapter. It will be surprising how rapidly you become able to price the majority of discs that you will meet with.

Now we will assume that you have made your list, and either typed or duplicated it, or had someone do it for you, and that you have a pile of addresses to which you duly send a copy. The correct procedure now is this:—

The customer sends a list of discs required, with for preference a number of alternatives quoted, and a spending limit given. It is essential that cash should not be sent at this stage, for much will then have to be returned. You can, having allotted the discs on the strict principle "first come, first served", send out the invoices, indicating the numbers of discs available, and the charge for post and packing. Or else you can send out the discs, putting the invoice in the box. One thing should be emphasised, if you require return of box and packing, say so on the lid and in the letter, else you won't get it back.

When sending out the box ask for a want list, detailed if possible, and point out that if you should come across anything on this list you will give the customer first refusal.

A hint about buying for stock from the postal auction will be as well put here as anywhere: this is to reckon the price you wish to pay, and then add three-halfpence to make your bid. In this way you get round both the person who bids in round figures, and the person who puts on one penny to get round him.

Other than finding your own customers, there are two ways of selling. One of these is direct to a dealer. This is, of course, the quickest way, but as a dealer has to live himself, naturally your prices are not going to be high. The other is to find a dealer who sells on commission. This will usually be 20% to 30%. This may seem high, but the final cash figure that you

will get from a direct sale would probably be about the same, when the cost of advertising and postages have been deducted, and in addition the dealer will probably get a higher price than you could. This is by far the most satisfactory outlet for the cheaper collectors' discs, popular discs, and records still in the catalogues. You should, of course, make a point of running through his stock from time to time, for you may well pick up bargains.

Chapter XI

Clearing Up Loose Ends

Now I would like to say a word about your own collection, especially as far as playing it goes. Much has appeared in the Press lately about equipment, and it is generally agreed that fibre needles, and a turntable with speed control, give the best result. But one thing which I have never seen mentioned is that certain late G. & T's, Pre-dogs, and Dog-Concerts behave with fibre needles as if they were pressed in vinylite, and the track is torn up. It is clear that if you keep these at all they will have to be played on steel. Of course, you will not wish to play everything on steel, and, if you have a lightweight pick-up the only steel needles that will fit are good for a hundred playings. In addition, you may well have one or two that owing to condition cause fibre breakdown. These two factors make it clear that a heavy pick-up is necessary for these discs, at anyrate, to take the once-only soft steel, or trailer needles.

I myself use a 1938 B.T.H. magnetic p.u., in company with a Garrard motor. The p.u. is capable of having the needle pressure reduced to little more than that of a miniature pick-up, and the motor can be varied in running speed from about 65 to 88 r.p.m. For all-round playing of pre-electric, and early electric discs, I think it would be hard to do better than this. If they can be found at a reasonable sum, the E.M.G. gramophones with external horn give very good reproduction of these records.

I'd now like to say a word about useful books. Bauer is useful, but very expensive. Dorothy Caruso's biography of her husband, quite apart from its value as reading matter, contains a discography, which is of considerable value.

"Opera at home" is of interest, and is very useful to hand to those listeners who will ask, "What's he singing about?" and who like to see the photos. An H.M.V. catalogue of about 1935-38 is one of the most useful books you can get for the money, for it contains complete lists of the Wagnarian sets mentioned earlier, and a fuller listing of the Historical Series than is otherwise available. A Parlophone catalogue of 1939-1940 is also a good buy, for it has both their Historical Series, and a fuller listing of Odeon re-issues than any other year. A Decca list of 1939 will contain the Decca-Polydor, and Bayreuth catalogue, as well as Decca, Brunswick, and Vocalion. That seems to be the lot; I'd like to wish you good hunting, and say that I'd like to hear of corrections, or suggestions as regards the book, which I hope proved worth buying.

"VOICES OF THE PAST"

Note: a complete catalogue of H.M.V. vocal records from 1896 to 1925 is being published by the Oakwood Press. Issues so far available are: Part 1 (151 to 2-2733), Part 2 (2-2735 to 3284), Part 3 (3285 to 04807) and Complete Index of Artists with record numbers: price 5s. 9d. each.

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Shop. Every classical type, all speeds, imported records. Lists sent free. Record catalogues. Ross, Court & Co. (Canada), 2098 Yonge Street, Toronto 7, Ontario, Canada.

All types. Foxley Gramophones, Exeter Parade, N.W.2. Tel.: Gladstone 3961.

Shop. Records only, all speeds, all types, jazz popular. Record magazine. "Books and Music", 10 Sicilian Avenue, Holborn, W.C.1. Tel.: Chancery 8669.

Shop. Records only, all speeds, all types (except classical). Jazz popular, personality pop., western, folk, hillbilly; records purchased for cash. Record library, record catalogues, wants lists invited. Jazz Man Record Shop, 2689 West Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles 6, California, U.S.A.

All types. W. S. Moxsom, 206 Forest Road, London, E.17. Tel.: LAR 1880.

Records purchased for cash. Len Daniels, 4 Soho Street, Oxford Street, W.1. Tel.: Gerrard 1604.

All speeds. jazz popular, catalogues and magazines. Records purchased for cash or credit. Post/COD free in G.B. Anything sent export at tax free prices. The Record Shop, 100 Charing Cross Road, W.C.2. Tel.: Temple Bar 8619.

Callers by appointment. All types, imported records; want lists invited. John Langmead, 63 Lydford Park Road, Plymouth.

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All types. 78 records only, want lists invited. No callers. Lists on subscription. C. S. Wiltshire, 6 Church Road, Epsom, Surrey.

Callers by appointment. 78 records only, vocal classical. P. V. Wisston, 62 West Drayton Road, Hillingdon, Middlesex. Tel.: Hayes 1578.

No callers. Jazz popular, personality pop., wants lists invited. T. Pepper, 181 St. Bernards Road, Olton, Solihull, Warwickshire.

Shop. All speeds, all types. No lists. Records purchased for cash. Gate Bookshop, 1 Ladbroke Road, Notting Hill Gate, London, W.11. Tel.: Park 5108.

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